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— (a) whether the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited
1 had decided to set up a Petro-Chemicals Complex in
— Tamil Nadu;

V' (b) if so, the details thereof including the amount of
investment involved therein;

(c) whether the financial viability of the project and
marketability of its products has been examined; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL
GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (d) BPCL is
exploring the possibility of setting up of a petro-chemical
complex at a location in coastal Tamil Nadu through a
joint venture company. Details regarding capital
investment, commercial and financial viability, etc. would
be known only after finalisation of DFR.

[Translation]

Withdrawal of subsidy on Petroleum Products

815. SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH : Will the
Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased
to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to withdraw
subsidy on petroleum products and natural gas;

(b) the percentage increase in the prices of petroleum
products after the withdrawal of subsidy;

(c) the total external debt resulted due to extending
subsidy on petroleum products, till date;

(d) whether the Government have formulated any
comprehensive welfare scheme in place of subsidy on
petroleum; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL
GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) and (b) The
Government have been exploring various options to
contain the deficit in the pool account and reduce the
subsidy on some of the petroleum products. The extent
of reduction in subsidy would depend on various factors
like international prices, tariff policy and demand etc.

(c) to (e) The total subsidy on the petroleum products
during 1996-97 was around Rs. 18,440 crores and is
estimated to be about Rs. 18,660 crores during 1997-98.
Subsidy on petroleum products is met from the oil pool

account mechanism. IOC is the canalising agency for
import of crude oil and petroleum products in the country.
The ceiling of short term foreign currency borrowings for
financing the oil imports has been progressively enhanced
from USD 1.53 billion upto February, 96 to the present
sanctioned limit of USD 3.5 billion. In addition, the
corporation has also availed US \$ 200 million 7 years
loan for import of oil. The actual level of short term
foreign currency borrowing of IOC for import of oil was
US \$ 2.04 billion as on 31.3.97.

[English]

Development of Road and Port Infrastructure Facilities

816. SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY : Will the Minister
of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether under the liberalised Surface Transport
Policy, significant private/foreign investment has started
flowing for development of road and port infrastructure
facilities;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the projects
received and cleared so far, State-wise;

(c) the progress achieved on current projects, project-
wise and the target date of their completion;

(d) the steps taken to remove the snags while
implementing the projects/schemes; and

(e) the steps on the anvil to encourage private sector
participation in the transport sector?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI
T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a)- Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Details for both road and port sectors
are given in the Statement attached.

(d) No major snags have been experienced in the
implementation of road projects so far. There is a Steering
group for each BOT road project to resolve the
bottlenecks, if any. In both Roads and Ports sectors
simplified and transparent guidelines have already been
published.

(e) As and when necessary, new steps are taken to
encourage private sector participation as a part of
continuous process.